

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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## BOYS WHO NEVER GROW UP

By Arthur T. Rich

Sent in by Charles Daniel

First published in The Evening News, London, England, Jan. 17, 1939

A Presbyterian minister in Devon who, recalling his London schooldays, will awaken memories in many a heart.

I met him more than 30 years ago; on the day he was born, in fact. He was about 12 years of age then and the miracle is that at the beginning of 1939 he is still the same age and, more remarkable, still at school.

Even on the day of his birth, he could play football, run races, that he always won, wage battles in which he was always successful and, more important, hold a large audience.

He looked at me from a bookstall on Kings Cross Station and I, the tailors errand-boy, on my way to fetch finished work from Aldgate, had unwittingly made a life-long friend. When Tom Merry entered my life I had never heard of Thomas Hardy or Rudyard Kipling. But I entered a realm of literature then that profoundly influenced me.

How many middle aged, literary highbrows tonight are prepared to make the same admission?

Will they, too, not confess to a sneaking regard for Bob Cherry, Arthur Augustus d'Arcy, Figgins and the immortal Billy Bunter, those static schoolboys of juvenile literature, devoured annually since by millions of Britain's youngsters?

Gladly I suffered for Tom Merry,

for often he got me into trouble. It was an art in those days in London schools—perhaps it still is—to master the trick of following the adventures of your heroes while long suffering L. C. C. teachers discoursed on geography and the Rule of Three. You had to learn to keep the halfpenny paper—its price in those days—firm between your knee and the printed page and keep two ears on the master, one eye on the blackboard and one on Tom Merry and Co.

Often one lesson would pass into another without your being aware of the fact. "What is the shortest distance between two points?" Your teacher would inquire suddenly, and you, thinking that the class lingered still on grammar because Tom Merry was just scoring his fifth goal of the match, would reply, "A noun, s.d."

One never-to-be-forgotten day my precious volume was purloined. In sympathy for my lack of literary taste, I received from the master, as much to my surprise, not the cane, but a copy of Stevenson's "Treasure Island," that I might know what blood and thunder I had been wasting time upon.

But never shall I forget coming upon my teacher in the deserted class room, after hours. He was enjoying five minutes with my hero and, to my unfounded delight, he was shaking with laughter. He returned the book later. I believe he had read the story right through and enjoyed it.

### In the "Shell" 30 Years

Yet those boys, surely, are terribly backward at school? In 1908 Tom Merry was in The Shell, and he's there yet. And Bob Cherry was in The Re-



Move, and not once in 30 years has he moved up a form. Billy Bunter has had more than 30 birthdays, but he's still in school.

I know, because, quite unashamedly, I meet them all again every Christmas.

I suspect, too, that I am not the only one.

Jack, Sam and Pete seem to have gone the way of all flesh; Sherlock Holmes is as dead as Spring-Heeled Jack; and Tom Brown lies neglected like a forgotten old boy having completed his course with credit. But everywhere I meet staid grown-up fans who, in secret, spend a passing hour with those schoolboys besides whom Peter Pan must seem a centenarian.

One memory of these boys stands out most vividly. It was during the war, I was bending over a dying sapper. Was there anything I could do for him before the end came? There was one thing. Would I read to him the remainder of the Tom Merry story sent to him from England? Pathetic, but in a way glorious. Probably he had never heard of Sir Walter Scott or Arnold Bennett, but his last hours were brightened by the long, long memories of youth. Literary critics may squirm, but here's to Tom Merry, Bob Cherry, Arthur Augustus, Bob Herries, Harry Wharton, Stout Billy Bunter and all. May they live long to entertain generations of British school boys in their clean, healthy English way.

And may they never grow up or advance in school by so much as a single form?

### THE BEADLE'S MONTHLY

Rev. Roland D. Sawyer

Some years ago in Boston I spent the afternoons of several happy weeks in reading from the bound volumes of the magazine of the period before the Civil War.

But from the antiquarian or historical standpoint, these bound volumes have small value compared with the magazines themselves, for the bound volumes drop the advertising pages. And these advertising pages are a fine running comment on the life of the time.

In an unbound copy of *HARPERS* for Dec. 1865, I find a whole page ad

of Beadle's Monthly, "a magazine for to-day, single copy 25 cents, \$3.00 a year."

On other pages are ads of *THE PHILADELPHIA HOME WEEKLY* and *THE NEW YORK WEEKLY*.

In the ads appear the names of some famous writers for the Beadle's Dime Novels, such as ANN S. STEPHENS, LEON, DUGANNE, EDWARD S. ELLIS, ROGER STARBUCK, but the popular writers of the decades 1870-1890, do not yet appear.

### NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

George S. Barton says that Bro. Sawyer is in error on the compensation of the dime novel writers. The compensation of Ingraham, Aiken, and Buntline was \$100.00 to \$150.00 for dime stories and from \$50.00 to \$100 for half dimes—the average \$75.00. Gil Patten got \$150.00 for his first dime library yarns—then was cut to \$125.00 and finally to \$100.00. He cut out Beadle & Adams after that. His half dime stories brought him \$75.00. Ned Buntline got more per story as most of them came out as serials. Mayne Reid was the highest paid, getting \$700.00 for his "White Squaw." George also says Edward L. Wheeler wrote all the Deadwood Dick novels. W. Bert Foster wrote for Munseys and S. & S. He wrote the best of the Buffalo Bill Stories as were many of the Nick Carters too.

Edward L. Wheeler was very proud of his D. D. Jr. yarns and Beadle & Adams wouldn't of had the nerve to turn them over to another man. (Note Roundup page 4, Newsy News in October 1945 issue).

George wants Good News #105, 106, 127, 128, 129, 130. Who has them?

See the nice big ad that Al Urban had in the last number and in this. Lots of nice stuff there, so be sure to send in your bid on that lot, Pals, if not already done so.

True Detective, a magazine that comes out every month. The October 1945 number, on page 59, has an article Broadway to Hollywood, by Joe Wieggers. Tells about a radio sleuth named Lou Clark, who plays the part of Nick Carter over the radio. There is an illustration of the old "Nick Carter Weekly" No. 59. A Message of



Fire, to go with the story. John Coryell, Nick Carter, N. Y. Weekly, Eugene Sawyer, Dick Tracy, Nick Carter Stories, Chick, Alger, Wild West, all are mentioned.

Anyone ever read the Ghost stories written from adventures of various boys, in the old Diamond Dick Jr. Weeklies back in 1903 after each story—sure some humdingers.

Frank Schott says he has nearly all of Bill Nye's works, and only needs a few more to complete his collection. He says Bill was a Wisconsin humorist of 1880.

There is so much that is bad  
in the best of us.

And so much that is good  
in the worst of us,

That it doesn't behoove any of us  
to talk about the rest of us.

Walter W. Tyson lost his dear mother March 11th, 1946. Bro. Walter says he is very lonesome, and will appreciate any letters written him at any time from other members. He is a circus items collector. Bill Gander lost his father in the middle of October 1945. He was 78 last May. Bill still has his mother with him, thank the good Lord for that. Wm. B. McCafferty also lost his dearest friend, his mother, a while back too, and we all miss our fathers and mothers as well.

Of all the friends a fellow has,

He'll never find another

Who will overlook his faults

Like you did, dearest mother.

Delbert Love says that customs duty between Canada and the U. S. takes all the fun out of exchanging old weeklies.

Nothing has been heard from Dare Devil Dave Adams or Fred Singleton for quite some time. It's believed that both are very sick.

Bill Gander says that cigarettes sell for 33c a package up his way. Some difference between up there and here, as they sell here at 18c a pack.

Bob Frye has been very sick, but all O. K. now.

Dan Bundza reports that the Deadwood Dick Library pub. by the Arthur Westbrook Co., in Nos. 17 and 35 are listed wrong in list of 64 titles, also in Pirate Story Series No. 4—LaFitte, Pirate of the Gulf. Col. Prentiss Ingraham is credited as author. Taint so, and he'd like to know how come. Story was written by his father, J. H. Ingraham and was published by Harper & Bros. in 1835.

A Correction—Through an error a statement made by Roy Caldwell was misquoted in the Newsy News column of the January Roundup. The statement had been made while discussing the idea of compiling a Complete and Comprehensive Encyclopedia of All Dime Novels and was as follows—"It would be a rather 'large order' and would involve a lot of time, study, research and work—truly a labor of love. If done well it could become a standard reference work for Libraries in the future. As you go into the subject you are going to discover it's hard to define 'Dime Novels' because so many of the stories first appeared in the serial story papers and any worthwhile work would have to follow them through the different formats."

With this issue, will be mailed a copy of the "Index-Digest," which will be very badly needed by all who have back numbers of the Dime Novel Roundup and we have George Flaum to thank for his untiring efforts in getting such a valuable piece of work together, which will be needed badly by all. Thank you very much, George, we do appreciate all you have done, in getting this work compiled—Ralph F. Cummings.

Willard D. Thompson, Specialist in juvenile fiction, 541 E. 5th St., Los Angeles, 13, Calif., always want E. Kellogg and Henty originals. Best stock of Castleman Books in West. Also want Golf Books, anything.

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**HOMER KURTZ**

451 11th St. Richmond, Calif.

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